

January 12, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David C. Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Revised Observer Program Biological Sampling
Manual and Fisheries Observer Program Manual

Recently, the Fisheries Sampling Branch (FSB) revised various sections of both the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Biological Sampling Manual and the Fisheries Observer Program Manual. Each observer is being issued a new manual to replace your existing ones. Several clarification changes have been made to each manual, however, only protocol changes will be summarized in this memo. Also included in this packet are blank logs that have had major changes made to them.

FISHERIES OBSERVER PROGRAM MANUAL

Vessel and Trip Information Log

< Instructions on what to do if you are on a beach seine trip have been added to the following fields:

Date Sailed
Time Sailed
Date Landed
Time Landed
Steam Time

Gillnet Gear Log

< Net Height - It is now acceptable to record the captain's estimate for this field. This field can be an estimated value obtained from the Captain but actual measurements are preferred. If the observer is unable to obtain an actual measurement for this field, the Captain's estimate should be recorded.

Scallop Dredge Haul Log

- < Recording Clappers - FSB previously requested that larger quantities of clappers be recorded in the comments section of the scallop haul log. Now, it is required that all clappers are recorded in the species section of the haul log. The correct way to record would be, *Clappers, Scallop*. Three additional species codes have been added for this purpose:

Clappers - Scallop
Clappers - Clam
Clappers - NK

- < Water Temperature - Since the end of April, 2003, all observers were required to record water temperature, to the nearest tenth of a degree Fahrenheit in the comments section. We have added a field box to the scallop haul log where water temperature should now be recorded.

Marine Mammal, Sea Turtle, and Sea Bird Incidental Take Log

- < Incidental Take Definition - the definition has been changed to:

If at any time during an observed trip a marine mammal, sea turtle, or sea bird directly contacts the vessel, or the vessel's fishing gear AND any part of the animal is entangled, snagged, ensnared, caught, hooked, collided with, hit, injured or killed by the vessel or its gear, regardless of the final condition and release of the animal, it should be documented on the Incidental Take Log.

After the incidental take definition a paragraph has been added to more clearly define what to do if the marine mammal, sea turtle, or sea bird is an articulated or disarticulated skeleton. The paragraph reads as:

Single bones or disarticulated marine mammal, sea turtle, or sea bird skeletons are recorded in the species section of the Haul Log as bone, nk. Articulated (>75% of skeleton) marine mammal, sea turtle, or sea bird skeletons are recorded on the Incidental Take Log and INC TAKE? field on the corresponding Haul Log should be checked as 'yes'.

< Entanglement Situation Codes - By request of the Protected Species Branch, we have added entanglement situation codes to better describe takes in the scallop and trawl fisheries. The new codes are:

- 18 = Caught inside dredge chain bag.
- 19 = On top of dredge or dredge frame.
- 20 = Caught in dredge frame or in between bails.
- 21 = Caught inside dredge in twine top.
- 22 = Caught on sweep/tickler/rock chains.
- 23 = Caught in bridles/cables/warp.
- 24 = Inside mouth of trawl net.
- 25 = Inside belly of trawl net.
- 26 = Inside codend of trawl net.
- 27 = Caught in sweep or footrope of trawl net.
- 28 = Contact with vessel or vessel equipment other than fishing gear.
- 29 = Entangled in gear other than vessel's fishing gear (e.g. ghost gear caught by vessel).

Appendices

< Disposition Codes (A.12) - added a discard disposition code: 039 (Poor quality, previously discarded fish). This should be used for fish that have been previously caught/processed and were recaptured by the vessel.

BIOLOGICAL SAMPLING MANUAL

Incidental Take Sampling Priorities for All Fisheries

< Page 3 - Revised the last sentence of sea bird protocols to reflect that all sea birds should NOT ONLY BE identified, recorded, checked for the presence of tags, released as soon as possible, but they also are required to be photographed.

Table 2

< Monkfish Sampling Target - Per statistical area, 20 vertebrae need to be collected for monkfish species that are over 40 cm and 5 vertebrae need to be collected for species that are under 40cm.

If you have any questions regarding these changes please contact KB McArdle at Katherine.McArdle@noaa.gov or (508) 495-2377.

Thank you.